

**QUERCUS GARRYANA / SYMPHORICARPOS ALBUS /  
CAREX INOPS**

Oregon white oak / common snowberry / long-stolon sedge

Abbreviated Name: QUGA/SYAL/CAIN

Synonym: *Quercus garryana* / *Symphoricarpos albus* /  
*Carex pensylvanica*

Sample size = 21 plots

**DISTRIBUTION:** Occurs more or less throughout the range of oak within the Puget Trough, including San Juan, Pierce, Thurston, Island, Clallam, Mason, Lewis, Grays Harbor and Clark counties. Occurs in southwestern BC also.

**GLOBAL/STATE STATUS:** G2S2. Most examples are very small or otherwise degraded. Few occurrences of good quality remain. Those that remain are highly threatened by non-native species, conifer encroachment, and development.

**ID TIPS:** Dominated by Oregon white oak. Common snowberry or tall Oregongrape dominate the understory and long-stolon sedge or other grassland/savanna herb species are present. Sword fern and moist-site herbs are absent or less abundant than grassland/savanna species.

**ENVIRONMENT:** These sites are dry to very dry and appear to be relatively nutrient-rich. Occurs on deep-soil coarse-textured glacial outwash plains, shallow soils over bedrock, or coarse-textured glacial till. Most common on flats or sunny aspects (south to west), but does occur on other aspects as well.

**Precipitation:** 21-54 inches (mean 42)

**Elevation:** 90-400 feet

**Aspect/slope:** S to NW/ 0-40% slope (mean 11)

**Slope position:** plain, mid, upper, short

**Soil series:** Spanaway, rockland, Hoypus, Nisqually

**DISTURBANCE/SUCCESSION:** In most stands, this association is probably the result of an increase of native understory shrubs in QUGA/CAIN-CAQU, or of oak invasion onto former prairies or savannas, in the absence of periodic fires. In the pre-Western settlement landscape, this type is hypothesized to have been rare or absent. In the absence of fire or active management, most of these stands are being invaded by Douglas-fir trees and are likely to convert to QUGA-PSME/SYAL/POMU and eventually to conifer forest.

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**Vegetation Composition Table (selected species):**

Con = constancy, the percent of plots within which each species was found;

Cov = cover, the mean crown cover of the species in plots where it was found.

Trees	Kartesz 2003 Name	Con	Cov
Oregon white oak	Quercus garryana var. garryana	100	60
Douglas-fir	Pseudotsuga menziesii var. menziesii	38	9
Oregon ash	Fraxinus latifolia	29	6
Pacific madrone	Arbutus menziesii	10	2
<b>Shrubs, Subshrubs</b>			
common snowberry	Symphoricarpos albus var. laevigatus	95	37
tall Oregongrape	Mahonia aquifolium	86	9
Scot's broom	Cytisus scoparius	76	9
serviceberry	Amelanchier alnifolia	76	8
Indian plum	Oemleria cerasiformis	48	4
trailing blackberry	Rubus ursinus var. macropetalus	43	5
oceanspray	Holodiscus discolor	29	14
beaked hazelnut	Corylus cornuta var. californica	14	9
<b>Graminoids</b>			
Kentucky bluegrass	Poa pratensis	86	13
long-stolon sedge	Carex inops ssp. inops	81	12
blue wildrye	Elymus glaucus	76	5
tall oatgrass	Arrhenatherum elatius	43	4
<b>Forbs and Ferns</b>			
common St. John's-wort	Hypericum perforatum	76	3
cleavers	Galium aparine	57	2
Nuttall's peavine	Lathyrus nevadensis ssp. lanceolatus var. pilosellus	52	3
yarrow	Achillea millefolium var. occidentalis	33	1
hairy cat's-ear	Hypochaeris radicata	29	+
common shepherd's-cress	Teesdalia nudicaulis	29	1
big-leaved sandwort	Moehringia macrophylla	24	5
sword fern	Polystichum munitum	19	2

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Plot locations  
of QUGA/SYAL/CAIN  
in Washington

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**VEGETATION:** Woodland or forest dominated by Oregon white oak. The understory is dominated by medium-tall shrubs, most often common snowberry. Tall Oregon grape is usually present and occasionally dominates or co-dominates. Scot's broom and serviceberry are other very frequent shrubs. Oceanspray is occasionally co-dominant. Long-stolon sedge and the non-native Kentucky bluegrass are usually prominent in the herb layer. Blue wildrye, common St-Johns-wort, and cleavers are usually present. Other prairie-associated plant species may be present. Sword fern and moist-site forbs are rare or absent.

**CLASSIFICATION NOTES:** Chappell and Crawford (1997) describe this association from the southern Puget Sound area. In BC, Erickson (1996) recognizes multiple community types that have affinities to this association.

**MANAGEMENT NOTES:** Maintenance of this association requires monitoring and active control of Douglas-fir. Reintroduction of fire into this association should reduce shrub cover over time, and if sufficient native seed and viable tubers are in the soil, reestablishment of the even more imperiled, and more important from a conservation perspective, QUGA/CAIN-CAQU association appears to be possible. However, if native herbaceous component in the soil has been removed by past heavy grazing or too long a period of shrub suppression, then fire may facilitate a conversion of understory to non-native grasses and forbs.

**BIODIVERSITY NOTES:** State candidate slender-billed white-breasted nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis aculeata*) is dependent on oak woodland habitat. State threatened western gray squirrel (*Sciurus griseus*) requires oak woodland as one component of its habitat, and probably uses this association.